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table readers will add any thing to these hints, they will it is hoped meet with that success which every virtuous endeavour merits.

A FRIEND TO YOUTH.

Saintfield, Jan. 12, 1809.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

SIR,

WHAT is the cause of the increasing immorality and irreligion of the present age, notwithstanding the rapid advances we are making in science and literature?

The system of education has been advancing gradually during the last 30 years, both in the useful and ornamental walks of northern literature; in the former of which our progress is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to the benevolent and ingenious MANSON. He contributed largely to the banishment of a difficult catechism, and the unintelligible cant of Hebrew names, and substituted in their room the allurements of emulation, the enlargement and culture of the soul, which have produced the fruits of temporal, and we trust, of eternal life, to many of the most respectable inhabitants of your flourishing town. Profiting by his example, others have improved upon his plan, and *mere* classics have been superseded by a regular course of mercantile learning, scientific classics, and polite literature. These scattered rays I shall rejoice to see collected into one focus in the capital of the North, and thence diverging in well tempered lustre from the majestic brow of Donnard, to the towering cliffs of Mangerton.

But let not mere theory, nor the glare of human learning dazzle our eyes so, that we shall not discover the gloom of infidelity, the false tapers of superstition, and the pitfalls of immorality, that encompass us on all sides. That religious impression has been on the decline for the last twenty years, we may see, from the general disregard of external ordinances, in the Northern Metropolis, from the thin attendance on public worship, from the general breach of the Sabbath, from the applause bestowed on loose deistical observations in private companies, as well as from the instances of perjury, that so frequently trip the course of law in our courts of justice.

The party spirit, that some years since rendered oaths so common, and bent religion and morals to the madness that ruled the hour, was not a *cause*, but a *consequence* of this consumption of the soul. The true cause we shall find in our system of education, in our neglecting, or making a secondary consideration of what ought to be a primary consideration, viz. the teaching Christian duty as a distinct *integral*, and at the same time, a *constituent* part of modern education.

For though neither the Assembly's Catechism, nor the Scriptures ought to be used as constant school-books, lest the difficulty of them, as elementary books, might give an early distaste to light, life, and happiness, yet ought we not so fastidiously to reject our forefathers' prepossessions in favour of the Book of Life, as to banish it entirely from our schools. By this means, we have got rid of superstition indeed, but by the same new-fangled sweeping act, we have sent into exile all knowledge of the scriptures, domestic prayer, and religious impression. Religion is completely superseded by the news of the day, the rate of markets, speculation, embargo, farming, and slander.

Now, the cure I propose, is the introducing of the Scriptures into the Schools, at least one day in every week, selecting such passages as are most suitable to their tender capacities, and most impressive of the pious and moral principles of truth, honesty, peace, love to God, and love to our neighbour. The giving and requiring, alternately, the necessary explanation of such passages, without meddling with the peculiar tenets of any church, could not fail to rescue the rising generation from the fangs of ignorant infidelity. I shall probably in your next number, develope a very simple plan of reform, for the education of youth, that has engrossed my thoughts for some years past, and that, if adopted by government, would, I trust, give new life, system, and energy to

the schools of Ireland, and at the same time restore us to the fostering bosom of Christianity.

January 27, 1809. SIMPLEX.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

THE EFFECT OF GENTLE TREATMENT IN TAMING ANIMALS, EXEMPLIFIED.

THAT a gentler mode than is generally pursued of taming, or as it is termed, of breaking animals, for the use of man, might be equally advantageous is usually allowed, but seldom practised. We are satisfied with acquiring their services, without much regarding the means by which they are procured, and are unwilling to submit to the tedious course of milder perseverance, while we have in our power the speedier one of severe discipline, not reflecting how frequently, when the lash is witheld, the violence of their nature will break out, even on their immediate masters. I acknowledge that the conduct of a brute is the result of habit however impressed, but it is still a question, and will probably ever remain so, whether habits of patient submission, and endurance of abuse, could not as well be obtained, especially among the nobler species of creatures, whose spirited exertion adds so much to their value, by mild and gentle treatment, as by the harsher methods generally pursued. I am inclined to think that brutes as well as men, have feelings that may be wrought upon, and affections that may be turned to our advantage, if treated with indulgence; and this I shall attempt to establish in a popular manner. I will relate a story which happened almost entirely within my own knowledge, of a dog whose ferocious habits were totally removed, by familiarizing him with the very object on which his fierceness had been accustomed to display itself.

Joe, the subject of my story, was of a mixed breed between a Newfoundland-dog and a mastiff, and first saw light on board an American trader, where he also spent the first six or seven months of his life. About this age, he was given to a gentleman near Londonderry, and when leading on shore, for the first time in his life, either from his ignorance of creatures that he had never met with before, or prompted by his natural ferocity, he darted from the hand that was leading him, and fastened upon the neck of a horse that was passing by, from which he was with great difficulty disengaged by his master, whose exertions, no doubt, were much strengthened by the dread of having to pay for the horse.

In the possession of his new master he watched the house, yards, and offices, kept intruders at a distance, and was considered by the maurauders round this gentleman's seat, as a most vigilant guard, and most terrible enemy to their pilfering. But surely if perfection is not the lot of man, we can hardly expect it in a brute. Joe's good qualities were sullied, and his vigilance and fidelity rendered almost useless to his master, by his fierceness. For though he lived in luxury, and meals were provided purposely for him, he could not repress his fondness for fresh mutton. The gentleman's sheep were found killed at night, and the delinquency was traced to Joe; he, like rational creatures might plead the force of a natural passion, but it would not be allowed him, and death or banishment must be the consequence of a repetition of his crime. Various plans were pursued to break him of this habit, and among others the following; he was muzzled, his limbs tied up, and in this condition laid across the door of an out-house, into which the sheep had been previously driven; they were then forced out; most of them sprung over him, dreading him even when fallen; but the ram could not pass this opportunity of revenging his slaughtered companions, and his own terrors, and stepping back, butted at him with all his might. This he was suffered to repeat as long as it was thought the dog could endure it. Joe was at length delivered from him, and untied; such was the severity of the discipline he underwent, that he was hardly able to limp to the kitchen fire; the rustics rejoicing in his downfall, and prophesying that he would never again meddle with the sheep.

In this hope, Joe was again permitted to go his rounds. He still exerted his useful qualities in his master's service; he continued watchful and faithful, but he could not